



## California Medicine

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## EDITORIAL

### Two Centennials

THIS MONTH and next month the two oldest county medical societies in California celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of their birth. Each claims uninterrupted continuity since 1868 and each gently challenges the other's presumption of primacy. San Francisco's evidence that it was founded in February of 1868 hangs by a slender but apparently continuous thread. The thread is the "Cash Book" for the Society which was opened in February 1868, meticulously kept and somehow survived the fire of 1906 to serve a few more years. All of the Society's other records were destroyed. Sacramento claims March of 1868 as the month of its birth, and so far as we know its continuity since that time has not been seriously disputed.

The San Francisco Medical Society and the Sacramento Society for Medical Improvement are both to be congratulated upon a first century of vigorous achievement. Elsewhere in this issue Mary Mathes recreates something of the atmosphere of those early days and writes entertainingly of medical science, doctor-patient relationships and even socio-economics as viewed by physicians a hundred years ago in California. Much of this was very different from what exists now, while some of the unresolved problems she discusses have an all too familiar ring even after a century of truly unprecedented progress.

While San Francisco may claim to have got there "fustest" and even to have been recognized first in this issue of CALIFORNIA MEDICINE, Sacramento will come in next month with the "mostest" since much of the March issue will be devoted to commemorating the Centennial of the Sacramento Society for Medical Improvement.

No doubt the question of which Society was founded first will continue in debate, and will therefore continue to stimulate further scholarship to fascinate us all concerning this early and turbulent period of medicine's history. CALIFORNIA MEDICINE salutes both these distinguished medical societies and wishes them well as they enter a second century of vigorous service to their members, the profession as a whole and the people of the county and the state.

### Lester Breslow

THE RESIGNATION of Dr. Lester Breslow as Director of The California State Department of Public Health terminates a career of more than 20 years in the state health department. During this period Dr. Breslow had many contacts among practicing physicians throughout the state and earned the respect of those who worked with him. In the two years he was director of the Department he continued a long tradition of liaison and dialogue between the Department and the California Medical Association, which over the years has resulted in a degree of cooperation between private practice and public health in California that is almost unique in the nation.

Dr. Breslow has been a regular contributor of authoritative and informative communications on public health to CALIFORNIA MEDICINE. He was active in the formulation of the Medi-Cal program and has staunchly supported the mainstream concept of medical care. He has been an indefatigable foe of undiscovered phenylketonuria, of preventable measles, of the evils of cigarettes and smog and, most recently, of unnecessary noise.